THE

HOME FRIEND;

A WEEKLY MISCELLANY OF AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION.

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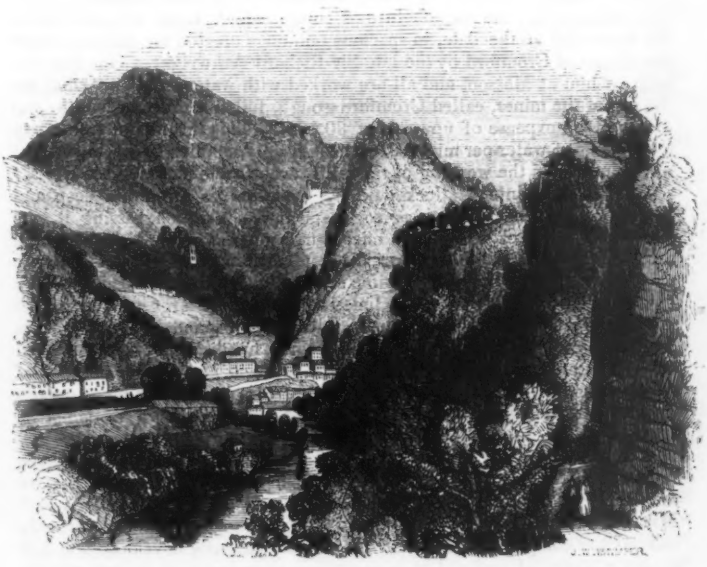
MATLOCK.



MATLOCK includes, under one name, the village of Matlock and Matlock Bath. The village, which is of very ancient origin, stands chiefly on the eastern banks of the river, while the Bath, of more recent origin, is on the western margin, about a mile and a half from the village; and until its warm springs were brought into notice, its situation, although beautiful and romantic, was only occupied by a few miners' cabins, while the whole dale is mentioned in the time of De Foe as being almost inaccessible from the want of a road.

The first of the springs was discovered about the year 1698, when the old bath was formed of wood, lined with lead, and a few small rooms were built adjoining the bath, forming, however, but a poor accommodation to visitors. Some years afterwards, the property having changed hands, two large and commodious buildings were erected, with stables and other conveniences, and a coach road formed along the river side from Cromford.

A second spring was found at about a quarter of a mile distant, and another bath erected; and at a still later period a third, three to four hundred yards to the east of that first discovered, and another bath and lodging-house built, now turned into a commodious hotel. The three buildings are respectively called, the Old Bath, the New Bath, and the Hotel. All the hot springs issue at a height of from about fifteen to thirty yards above the level of the river; higher or lower, the springs are only cold and common water.

The hot springs are not of a high temperature, the thermometer in the bath not rising higher than 68°, and in chemical and medicinal properties they are much like that of the Clifton hot-wells, while the surrounding scenery vividly calls that spot to remembrance.

The village of Matlock is chiefly inhabited by persons employed in the lead mines and in the manufacture of cotton, which latter is carried on at the upper end of the dale, in spacious buildings erected for the purpose at the village of Cromford by the late Sir Richard Arkwright. One was also built by him at Masson, and all are worked with water from an "adit" for the use of the mines, called Cromford sough, full two miles in length, and driven at an expense of upwards of 30,000*l*. This throws out from forty to fifty tons of water per minute, and being partly supplied by warm springs, never interrupts the working of the mills, even in the most intense frosts.

The entrance into Matlock dale, by Cromford, is through a deep and narrow excavation in Scarthing rock, and immediately on passing it, the splendid scenery of the dale at once bursts on the eye. Following the ascending road on the left, we reach a hotel, commanding from its grounds a very fine view of the surrounding scenery, and which also possesses an object well worthy of notice in a lime-tree, one of the largest of its species anywhere to be seen in England. Full of years, and yet luxuriant in foliage, it covers an area of more than three hundred and thirty feet in circumference. Under the High Tor a mine is now in operation, and near this mine is the crystallized grotto, which is approached by a wooden bridge over the Derwent; and although of considerable extent, is not so remarkable for its dimensions, as peculiarly interesting from the curiously organized materials of which it is composed. The floor, the sides, and the roofs are one entire mass of crystallized carbonate of lime, the general form of which is provincially known by the name of "dog's-tooth spar." Millions of these crystals are here congregated together; some perfectly defined and complete in form, and others only partially developed; and as such a quantity of material in a crystalline state is not to be met with in any other part of Derbyshire, the grotto is therefore deserving of particular attention.

The western bank of the Derwent, for the whole distance between Matlock and the old bath, is one vast bed of tuphus or calcareous incrustation, which has been deposited by the waters flowing from the warm springs. This is commonly called "petrified moss," and appears to have been formed on a morass, or collection of moss, shrubs, and small trees; it is extremely porous, and, like the tufas of volcanic countries, highly favour-

able to vegetation. In this stratum, if it may be so called, the two petrifying wells of Matlock are situated.

Petrifying springs are those where the water penetrates the pores of vegetable and animal substances placed in them, dissolves out and removes the particles of which they are composed, and substitutes earthy or stony particles, which are arranged in the same way as those of the former substances, and preserve their general form. The rivers Danube and Pregal, in the course of ages, convert in this manner into petrifactions stakes of wood placed in them.

The collection exhibited by the person who keeps the springs at Matlock contains several extraordinary instances of vegetable, animal, and testaceous substances, which have been thus converted into stone by the petrifying process of the well. Among them, we remember seeing a beautiful specimen of a bird's nest and eggs.

Four excellent museums are open to the public at Matlock, the first of which emanated from the distinguished traveller and mineralogist, Mr. Mawe. This contains not only a rich store of the spar and fluor productions of the country, but a great and choice variety of urns, vases, groups, and figures, sculptured in Italian marble and alabaster; minerals, native and foreign, precious stones and shells, with various other natural productions abound.

Diamond engraving on black marble originated in Matlock, being introduced by a lady from Sheffield on a visit to the springs, and who subsequently executed many of the earlier specimens of this mode of ornamenting black marble. Her subjects were chiefly moonlight effects, for which this kind of engraving seems peculiarly adapted. Mr. Rayner has now brought similar representation to a high degree of excellence, and they have quite assumed the character of works of art. The picturesque neighbourhoods of both Buxton and Matlock offer much that is interesting to the artist as well as the naturalist, and many magnificent subjects for the pencil exist, of which we shall not attempt the slightest description, knowing full well how cold and feeble must be the language of mere words in attempting to give an idea of that species of beauty which, as in the scenery of this romantic country, so nearly approaches to sublime grandeur.

ASSYRIA—HUNTING.

"And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth: he was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." (Gen. x. 8, 9.)

In the early ages of the world, when men were few, but yet were energetically extending their sway over the earth, they would find their supremacy continually challenged by the savage animals of the forest and jungle, of various formidable races. The primeval seats of the human family after the flood, and the countries immediately surrounding, into which they would first push their dominion, were then and are still the prolific regions of some of the mightiest and most ferocious of the brute creation, ever ready to contest with tusk and horn, talon and fang, the lordship of man. The kingly lion, the tiger, the leopard, and the panther lurked in the covert, thirsty for blood; the wooded mountain sheltered the secondary *felinæ*, with the wolf, and the bear; the plains re-echoed the shriek of the hyena and the jackal: the elephant and the rhinoceros shook the gloomy forest: the fierce boar, prompt for war, ravaged the newly-planted gardens

and vineyards; fierce and powerful baboons, cunning as cruel, dwelt in the caves and recesses of the woods; and animals of the herbivorous class, yet hardly less bold and savage than the lords of the carnivorous tribes, the nylghau, the wild bull, the buffalo, the urus, and the bison—were ready to use their gigantic strength in instant assault upon any foe, bestial or human, that might dare to invade their domain.

To meet these sylvan possessors of the earth, and either to destroy them or to expel them from the vicinity of cultivation and settlement, was thus absolutely necessary, and the successful hunter would be legitimately regarded as a benefactor of his race. Many qualities of mind and body would be brought into practice, and would be improved by the exercise, in this indispensable employment, which would impart to their possessor a halo of glory in the eyes of his fellows, and would lead the way for the assumption on the one hand, and for the concession on the other, of royal authority and power. Personal prowess and daring hardihood would prompt the youth to seek the lion or the buffalo; a knowledge of his enemy's haunts, and of his habits would be needful to guide him in the conflict; the powerful muscular frame, to sustain the shock of the assault; skill in the use of weapons, the practised eye, the ready hand, to direct the blow with precision and effect; agility to evade the forceful impetus of his brute foe; a mind fertile in resources and stratagems; promptitude to follow up an unexpected advantage; fortitude in danger; patience in suffering:—such are some of the qualifications which would be indispensable for one who in those early days, and in that region of the earth, was ambitious to claim the reputation of a "mighty hunter."

Hunting was thus only of less importance as an occupation than war itself. It was, indeed, considered by the ancients as a sort of war, and formed a fit preparatory education for that sterner conflict, in which the resources of man were engaged against those of his fellow-man.

The divine grant of flesh for human food, conferred for the first time upon man, in God's covenant with him after the deluge, would doubtless give a motive and a zest to the sport of hunting. Perhaps the rebellious race of Cain had eaten flesh before the flood, without waiting for the divine permission; but now that all restrictions were taken off, men, we may be sure, would not be slow to avail themselves of the newly-bestowed privilege. Without the resources of hunting, however, the permission would have been of little avail to them; for though flocks and herds were under man's dominion from the very earliest ages, and, as we firmly believe, were originally given to him in a state of domestication, yet these would be much too valuable in the infancy of the world, for the gratification of habitual appetite in this way. Accordingly, when Isaac wished for "savoury meat," though the event proved that a kid from his own flocks could be so dressed as not to be distinguishable from game, and though "he had great possession of flocks, and possession of herds" (Gen. xxvi. 14), yet he did not send to these for his meat, but commissioned his elder son to go forth to the field "to hunt for venison." And this was not an extraordinary case, for we learn that Isaac habitually "ate of his venison" (Gen. xxv. 28); and so valuable were the talents of the "cunning hunter," in thus supplying the family with animal food, which otherwise they would probably seldom have tasted, that Isaac's affections were peculiarly drawn out to him on this account.

The same feelings prevail in the East to this day. Very little animal food is eaten, and least of all by the pastoral wanderers, who have ample

flocks and herds. "The Oriental shepherds," observes Dr. Kitto, "seldom, except to entertain a stranger (see Gen. xviii. 7), think of diminishing their flocks to supply themselves with meat. They are as glad of any game that falls in their way, as if they had not a sheep or goat in their possession; and it was quite natural that such a 'cunning hunter' as Esau should rather be directed to go out into the fields and shoot game, than to go and fetch kids from the flock."*

Lion Hunt.

If the various tribes of animals now existing in a state of domestic servitude, were not originally created in that state, as we believe they were, and given to man as an inestimable boon to lighten his penal toil, or to minister to his wants;—if in the early ages the horse, the ass, the bull, the goat, the sheep, the dog, were denizens of the woods and plains in native freedom, a condition of being which, as regards these races, has confessedly not been recognised within the reach of history or tradition, then the stratagems and the labours of the hunter would have another object not less important than those which we have noticed. The subjugation of the horse and of the bull from the wild liberty of nature, and the training of these fine animals to perform the various services that man required, laying their gigantic strength at his feet,—would surely be a nobler conquest, and would reflect upon the primitive heroes who achieved it a greater honour, than the defeat of armies and the capture of cities. But this, we think, was no human achievement.

Jehovah's questions to Job appear to imply that the docility of domestic animals is a quality implanted in them by Himself; and that it is not given to man's endeavours to subjugate such as are naturally wild.

"Will the unicorn [the *Reem*, probably some ferocious animal of the

* Pict. Bible, i. p. 175.

bovine race,] be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?" (Job xxxix. 9—12.)

But why not, if it was merely contingent upon human skill to subdue and to train the wild animals?

The early Assyrian kings, like the illustrious founder of their monarchy, were "mighty hunters," men who loved the chase, and who hesitated not to peril life and limb in single combat with the most savage and powerful denizens of the forest. In those days, the noble sport was pursued in a very different mode from that in which it was followed afterwards in the Persian "paradises," where the affrighted beasts were congregated into a narrow space, and shot by the monarch, or rather butchered, from some elevated post where no danger could approach his person. The early heroes, Ninus and Semiramis, had immortalized themselves by their personal exploits with the lion and the panther, which popular tradition delighted to repeat; and they and their successors had sought to perpetuate the memory of these glorious deeds, by sculpturing them on the marble walls of their palace courts, as not less worthy of remembrance than the scenes of martial conquest with which they were intermingled, or the congregation of tribute-bearers which symbolised a dominion extending from sea to sea.

Another kind of commemoration of the exploits of the "mighty hunter" was the exaltation of him to the skies; for the most striking and splendid constellation in the nocturnal heavens, Orion, with his starry belt and pendent sword, preceded by the hare, and followed by the dog (according to Chaldean astronomy), was considered to represent Nimrod.

HISTORY OF GUTTA PERCHA—(*continued*).

Singapore and Borneo appear to be the only countries at present known from which gutta percha can be obtained in large quantities. The trunk of the gutta percha tree (*Isonandra gutta*) is straight and lofty, and about three feet in diameter at its base; its branches are numerous, having ascending terminal buds, which are white from exuding gutta; the timber is hard, and sometimes used for building and other purposes. The flowers and leaves are shown in the cut. The proper mode of obtaining the juice is to tap the trees periodically. Some young trees were planted in the conservatory of Kew Gardens, but from some unexplained cause the experiment was unsuccessful.

The natural order of plants to which it belongs, *Sapotaceæ*, consists of trees or shrubs which are chiefly natives of the tropics, and often abound in milky juice. The members of this family are chiefly remarkable for the fruit yielded by them, some kinds of which are held in high estimation. Some yield a thick oil like butter, and some have medicinal properties. But the existence of so remarkable and peculiar a substance as gutta percha in the milky juice appears not to have been noticed until the accidental discovery of the substance in the hands of a native first directed attention to the subject.

Some interesting facts appeared in one of the public prints in 1850, which deserve extraction here. Previous to 1844, it is observed, the very

name of gutta percha was unknown to European commerce. In that year, two cwt. of it were shipped experimentally from Singapore. The exportation of gutta percha from that port rose in 1845 to 169 piculs (the picul is 133⅓lbs.), in 1846, to 5,364; in 1847, to 9,296; in the first seven months of 1848, to 6,768 piculs. In the first five years and a half of the trade 21,598 piculs of gutta percha, valued at 274,190 dollars, were shipped at Singapore, the whole of which was sent to England, with the exception of 15 piculs to Mauritius, 470 to the continent of Europe, and 922 to the United States.

THE GUTTA PERCHA PLANT.

But this rapid growth of the new trade conveys only a faint idea of the commotion it created among the native inhabitants of the Indian Archipelago. The jungles of the Johore were the scene of the earliest gatherings, and they were soon ransacked in every direction by parties of Malays and Chinese, while the indigenous population gave themselves up to the search with an unanimity and zeal only to be equalled by that which in the railway world agitated England about the same time. The Tamungong, with the usual policy of oriental governors, declared the precious gum a government monopoly. He appropriated the greater part of the profits, and still left the Malays enough to stimulate them to pursue their search, and to gain from one hundred to four hundred per cent. themselves on what they procured from the aborigines. The Tamungong, not satisfied with buying at his own price all that was collected by private enterprise, sent out numerous parties of from ten to one hundred persons, and employed whole tribes of hereditary serfs in the quest of gutta percha.

This organized body of gum-hunters spread itself over the whole of Johore, peninsular and insular. They crossed the frontier into Ligua, but there the Sultan was not long in discovering the new value that had been conferred on his jungles. He confiscated the greater part of what had been collected by the interlopers, and in emulation of the Tamungong declared gutta percha a royalty.

The knowledge of the article stirring the anxiety of the gatherers, they gradually spread from Singapore northward as far as Penang, southward along the east coast of Sumatra to Java, eastward to Borneo, where it was found at Brune, Sarāwak and Pontianak on the west coast, and at Keti and Pania on the east. The imports of gutta percha into Singapore from January 1 to July 12, 1848, according to their geographical distribution were:—from the Malay peninsula, 593 piculs; from the Johore archipelago, 1,269; from Sumatra, 1,066; from Batavia, 19; from Borneo, 55. The price at Singapore was originally 8 dollars per picul; it rose to 24, and fell about the middle of 1848 to 13.

XUM

In the course of three and a half years, 270,000 trees were felled in order to get at the gum.

It may be interesting to state the fact, that in all probability gutta percha, or some substance closely allied to it, was introduced into England long before our own time, becoming afterwards forgotten. In a catalogue of Tradescant's Museum (now the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, but at its first institution, about two centuries ago, at South Lambeth), we have met with the following sentence. "The plyable mazer wood, being warmed in water, will work to any form." Such is the well-known and characteristic peculiarity of this substance. Being, however, simply a curiosity, and none dreaming of its practical application, it was soon neglected and afterwards forgotten.

The imports of gutta percha into Great Britain from Singapore are interesting, and illustrate the rapid and enormous development of the trade.

Years.	lbs.
1844	230
1845	22,000
1846	710,000
1847	1,200,000
1848	1,700,000

PROPERTIES OF GUTTA PERCHA.

Gutta percha is imported into England in a variety of forms, some of which are represented in the annexed engraving. It differs in its state as

CURIOUS BLOCKS OF GUTTA PERCHA.

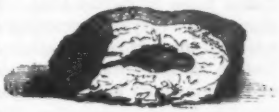
raw material, very considerably, from the appearance it presents when manufactured. This is principally due to the existence of a vast amount of impurities in the raw material, chiefly consisting of vegetable fibre, pieces of bark, and earthy matters intermixed.

The appearance of a block of raw gutta percha is very similar to that of a piece of white or dirty yellow wood. It is hard, scarcely indented by the nail, and might be well mistaken for a log of wood from which the bark had been removed. The shape of these blocks varies, as do also their size and quality. A large number have the form of a thick cake, not unlike that of linseed after having undergone hydraulic pressure; but others wear a more grotesque aspect, as may be conceived from the figures

STONE IN BLOCK

represented in the cut in the preceding page. The forms of uncouth animals, of monstrous heads, of birds, of lizards, serpents, crocodiles, and such like, are occasionally found among the heaps of the raw material brought to this country. These represent either the idols of the native collectors, or are mere vagaries of their imagination. The soft and ductile nature of the material when newly collected, offers a great inducement to those who are disposed to give these curious forms to it.

Gutta percha is very extensively adulterated by the Malays. In collecting it, sufficient care does not appear to be taken, to prevent its becoming impregnated with chips of wood, bark, &c.; and thus unintentional impurities become mixed with it. But there are others of a more serious kind, which are unquestionably fraudulent. Not unfrequently, in the centre of an apparently excellent specimen of the material, a large stone is discovered, purposely introduced in order to add to its weight; and earth, clay, and wood, are found in different masses. Before the material can be employed, it is necessary to remove all these, and powerful and costly machinery is employed for that purpose. If the material were only collected with sufficient care and by honest persons, several steps in the manufacture might be dispensed with; and had not a simple method of removing these impurities and adulterations been discovered, gutta percha would have ceased to become an object of social or commercial value.



STONE IN BLOCK.

Some of the earliest specimens of gutta percha sent over to this country were placed in the hands of some good analytical chemists, who carefully investigated its chemical composition. Dr. Maclagan appears to have been the first to have analysed it, and the following is the substance of his observations. Gutta percha in its crude state differs in many particulars from common caoutchouc. It is of a pale yellowish, or rather dirty-white colour. It is nearly as hard as wood, though capable of being slightly indented by the nail. It is very tenacious and not at all elastic.

To determine whether or not this substance really was a variety of caoutchouc, it was submitted to the ordinary process of ultimate analysis, and the following composition per cent. was obtained:—

Carbon - - -	86·36
Hydrogen - - -	12·15
Residue - - -	1·49
	100·00

The residue was considered to be oxygen absorbed from the air during the process employed for purifying it, since the substance, while heating in the vapour bath, acquired a brown colour. The analysis of caoutchou, according to Faraday, is:—

Carbon - - -	78·2
Hydrogen - - -	12·8
	100·0

The results of the analysis of gutta percha appeared almost to lead to the conclusion, that it was in reality similar to caoutchouc, the two substances not being generically different.

In its general properties, it likewise shows a similarity to common

caoutchouc. It is soluble in coal naphtha, in caoutchouc oil, and in ether. It is insoluble in alcohol and in water, and floats upon the latter.

Its most remarkable and distinctive peculiarity is the effect of heat upon it. When placed in water at a temperature of 110°, no effect is produced upon it except that it receives the impression of the nail more readily; but when the temperature is raised to 145° or upwards, it gradually becomes so soft and pliant as to be capable of being moulded into any form, or of being rolled into long pieces or flat plates. When in the soft state it assumes all the properties of common India-rubber, but it does not retain these properties long. It now begins again to grow hard, and in a short time, varying according to the temperature and size of the piece operated upon, it regains all its original hardness and rigidity. A ball one inch in diameter was completely softened by boiling water in ten minutes, and regained its hardness entirely in less than half an hour. It appears capable of undergoing this alternate softening and hardening any number of times without change of quality.

It is also to a certain extent ductile. When soft, it is easily torn across, but when hard, it is very tenacious. A piece not an eighth of an inch in thickness, when cold, easily raised a weight of forty-two pounds, and only broke when half a hundredweight was attached to it.

OUR NATIVE SONGSTERS—*continued.*

THE WREN.

Who that notices birds has not a kindly thought for that sweet songster of the winter day, that familiar little bird, the common Wren, or Kitty Wren, or Jenny Wren* as it is often called? the *Troglodytes Europæus* of the ornithologist. Every country child gives it a welcome, as it hops

* The Wren is nearly four inches in length. Plumage reddish-brown, crossed by narrow bars of blackish; the ground-colour is paler on the under parts, fading to light buff on the breast and throat; beak brown; feet pale brown.

about the garden or beside the arbour, glad enough, when snows and frosts are come, to share the meal of the robin. Like the redbreast it is a privileged bird, and the legends are of great antiquity which describe it as peculiarly protected by the care of Him who made it. Grose remarks that it is held extremely unlucky to kill a cricket, a lady-bug, a swallow, martin, robin redbreast, or wren. It is supposed, he says, that any one killing them would infallibly break a bone, or meet with some misfortune during the year; but the old legend no longer prevails with respect to the insect favourites, with the exception of the cricket; and the redbreast and wren seem the only privileged birds of modern times.

It is remarkable that a bird thus shielded by tradition in one country, should be the object of cruel treatment in another, on the ground of ancient legend. In Ireland, however, a barbarous custom, of great antiquity, prevails in modern days, of hunting the wren on Christmas-day, though happily the usage is becoming less frequent than formerly. The peasants are accustomed at this season, just when the poor bird needs most the kindness of man, to chase it through the hedges, and to beat it to death with sticks. This they accomplish by means of two sticks, with one of which they strike the bushes, while the other is thrown at the wren. Mr. Thompson, in treating of the birds of Ireland, remarks that it was the boast of an old man, who died at Kerry, at the age of a hundred years, that he had hunted the wren for the last eighty years on a Christmas-day. On St. Stephen's day the village children carry about an ivy-bush, decked with variously coloured ribbons, among which the slaughtered birds are exhibited. They go from house to house, collecting money, and singing the well-known and foolish song commencing thus,—

"The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's-day was cot in the furze,
Although he is little, his family's grate,
Put your hand in your pocket, and give us a thrate,
Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy, sing holly," &c. &c.

A little inoffensive bird like the wren seems ill to merit this traditionary hatred, but Aubrey, in his Miscellanies, relates the tale which is its supposed origin. After having mentioned the last battle in the North of Ireland, between the Protestants and Roman Catholics, in Glinsuly, in the county of Donegal, he says, "Near the same place a party of the Protestants had been surprised, sleeping, by the popish Irish, were it not for several wrens, that just wakened them, by dancing and pecking on the drums, as the enemy was approaching. For this reason the wild Irish mortally hate them to this day, and killing them whenever they can catch them, they teach their children to thrust them full of thorns; you'll see sometimes on holidays a whole parish running like madmen from hedge to hedge, a wren-hunting."

Sonnini records a cruel hunting of the wren common in some parts of France, at the latter end of December, but in that country a different tradition accounts for it.

But leaving superstitious practices, which are too often mingled up with the elements of cruelty, we must return to our bird, the smallest of all our singers save the gold-crest. Its song, short, sweet and lively as it is, loses nothing from the fact of being heard when none else save that of the robin is likely to arrest our step, as we hasten over the frosty ground. One could hardly believe that so loud a song issued from so small a throat; but the bird gives us full means of ascertaining that it does so, for it sits

perched on the top of a farm-yard stack, or on the bough of the hedgerow, or on the gooseberry bush, singing as merrily as if it were summer, and apparently well pleased to have a listener, as if it scarcely expected that we should come abroad in January to hear it. Nor can we mistake the wren for another bird, for its very smallness serves to identify it, and no sooner has it uttered one short stave, than it is away to another spot, making short, weak flights, or hopping about with drooping wings and raised tail, making a low chirring sound. If alarmed by our near or sudden approach, it winds its way most ingeniously through the hedges or bushes, and again we see it at a short distance a minute afterwards, flying off a little farther, and creeping away from us as a mouse might do. Though it does not come with the robin to peck its meal from the window-sill, or around the breakfast table, it ventures into the farm-yards and gardens for what it may chance to find, though doubtless in severe seasons many wrens die of hunger. Treat our little jenny-wren but gently, however, and do not alarm it by a rash footstep, and it will love your company, and flutter for some paces before you, as if it intended to show you the way, seeming all the time to mark you with a most inquisitive look, as if apparently not only observing your actions, but even scanning your physiognomy.

The wren builds early in spring, generally about March, placing its nest against the side of a tree, a hay-rick, the wall of a house, or some other sheltered spot; and it often shows much sagacity by making it to correspond in colour with the object near it; thus, when affixing it to a mossy-covered trunk, green is the predominant hue; while, when near the hay-rick, a large amount of dried grasses renders the nest of similar colour; and again, when sheltered by the ivy, the moss prevails. This ingenuity is not, however, universally practised by the wren, and, as Mr. Jennings has observed, something must depend on the ease or difficulty with which the materials can be procured. This writer remarks, that when the nest is made wholly of green moss, and he has seen many so made, it is much more neatly and exactly defined than when composed of any other material. Grey lichens and grasses are used in some cases by the wren, and the interior is lined either with hair or feathers, and contains about eight or ten egs, though sometimes there are as many as eighteen. They are of a yellowish white, speckled with brown.

Many little acts of ingenuity in rendering the nest less obvious to the passer-by have been recorded by those who have noticed birds. Mr. Jesse tells us of one that he had in his possession, which, being built among some litter, thrown into the yard, so nearly resembled the surrounding objects, that it was only discovered by means of the bird flying out of it. He adds, some of the straws were so thick, that one wonders how so small a bird could have used them. Mr. Yarrell observes of this, that in such cases the wren was, in some measure, influenced by the proximity of materials; but several instances are recorded by naturalists, in which design is so marked, that we hardly know whether to call it instinct or reason.

"I was much pleased this day, June 14th," says Mr. Knapp, "by detecting the stratagems of a common wren to conceal its nest from observation. It had formed a hollow space in the thatch, on the inside of my cow-shed, in which it had placed its nest by the side of a rafter, and finished it with its usual neatness; but lest the orifice of its cell should engage attention, it had negligently hung a ragged piece of moss on the

straw-work, concealing the entrance, and apparently proceeding from the rafter; and so perfect was the deception, that I should not have noticed it, though tolerably observant of such things, had not the bird betrayed her secret, and darted out. Now from what operative cause did this stratagem proceed? Habit it was not; it seemed like an after-thought; danger was perceived, and the contrivance which a contemplative being would have provided, was resorted to."

Nor should we here forget the poet's testimony to a little contrivance of this sort, narrated by Wordsworth, in his poem called the Wren's Nest. A pair of these birds had placed their cozy dwelling in a green covert, made by the branches of a pollard oak:—

"But she who plann'd this mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a primrose look'd for aid,
Her wishes to fulfil.

"High on the trunk's projecting bough,
And fix'd, an infant's span, above
The budding flowers, peep'd forth the nest,
The prettiest of the grove."

In later days, the poet wandered to the oak to show to some friends the nest placed so prettily there, when he could see it no longer, and believed that some rude hand had carried it away:—

"Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light, the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth,
And felt that all was well.

"The primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus for purposes benign
A simple flower deceives."

A very singular circumstance occurs respecting wrens' nests. Many are found in an incomplete state, and it would seem that, after having been begun, they were abandoned by the bird, which, on second thought, deemed that the site had been, in some way or other, ill chosen. These half-finished empty nests are often found in very conspicuous places, instead of being well planned for concealment.

As the old Irish song says of the wren, "Her family is grate." She has two broods in a season, and as many as sixteen young birds have been sometimes found in one nest. There must be much to do in feeding a family like this, for in common with all other nestlings, they are very voracious, and the wrens are not far fliers, and must therefore seek their food very near their home. The nest is large and deep, and some of the young brood must be placed at so great a distance from the aperture, that one would fancy they must be sorely inconvenienced for want of light and air. There, however, they thrive, and, as Graham says, are

"Fed in the dark, not one forgot."

It was doubtless because of this dome-like and gloomy dwelling, that the ancients termed the wren *Troglodytes*, or dwellers in caves.

The wren is a most valuable little bird in ridding plants of the numerous insects which infest them, and it may often be seen, with its tail raised, hunting every bud and leaf, and peering with its bright eyes into every crevice of the bough, chirring, and evidently enjoying its occupation.

XUM

Cabbages, peas, beans, lettuces, flower-stems, are all searched and cleared; and when these resources fail, and the cold drives the wren nearer to the homes of man, it hops about the thatch of the barn or cottage, or by the side of the drains, or among the straw of the farm-yard, hunting up any dormant insects which lie hidden, to open to their summer life when sunshine is come.

A gentleman who watched a pair of wrens with a brood of little ones, found that they went from the nest, and returned with insects in their mouths, from forty to sixty times in an hour; and in one particular hour, the birds carried food to their young seventy-one times. He considers that they worked thus twelve times a-day, and that, taking the medium of fifty times in an hour, they thus cleared from the plants at least six hundred insects in the course of the day. This calculation is made on the supposition that the two birds took only a single insect each time. But it is highly probable that they carried off more than one at every flight.

Notwithstanding that the wren is hardy, and seems to enjoy the clear bright days of winter, yet probably in extremely severe seasons many of the species die of cold and want. During this period, they seek shelter in holes of walls, and under the eaves of corn and hay-stacks. Mr. Selby found the dead bodies of several wrens in an old deserted nest, where they had probably assembled to crowd closely together, for the sake of warmth and shelter from the storm; and a number of wrens rolled together, as in a ball, have been found in a hole of a wall, to which they had apparently come for the night. It is probable that many of our little birds may thus, during winter, keep close together, and so preserve the heat of themselves and each other. When kept in cages, wrens are generally supplied with a well-covered and lined box, in which they may pass the night.

It is difficult to conjecture why the wren should, from the earliest ages, have been called the king of the birds, and this not merely by ancient writers, but by the peasantry of almost every land. Our little gold-crest seems fitted by his beautiful coronal to bear the name of Kinglet, the synonyme of which is so general; but the wren is small and feeble, and has withal no robe of royalty, nor the crown of gold. The old writers tell that the eagle fought with the wren, as with a rival king; and Colonel Vallancy, in his learned work on the Irish, terms the wren, the augur's favourite, and remarks that the Druids represented it as the king of birds. He adds, that the superstitious reverence formerly shown to this little creature, offended the early Christian missionaries, and that their displeasure on account of it originated the cruel practice before alluded to, of hunting and killing the bird on Christmas-day. Of old times, it was also called

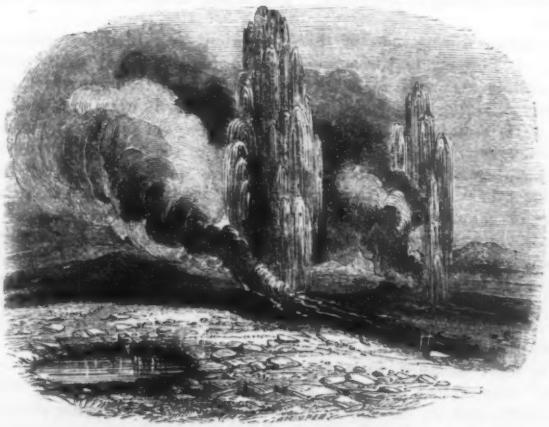
"The little wrenne,
Our Lady's henne;"

so that, somehow or other, the bird has, from remotest periods, been an object of superstition. Even to the present day, the Italians call it the Little king (*Reattino*), the King of the hedge (*Re di siepe*), or the King of the birds (*Re degli uccelli*). The Spaniards, too, term it the Kinglet; and the Portuguese, the Bird-king. So also the French give it the name of *Roitelet*, or Little king, or of King-berry (*Roi-berry*), or of King of the cold (*Roi de froidure*). The Germans call it by the poetic names of Snow-king (*Schnee König*), and Thorn-king (*Dorn-König*). The Dutch preserve still their old name of the wren (*Konije*, Little king), and the Welsh simply term it *Bren*, King. In some French provinces, the peasants call the wren by the no less unaccountable name of *Bœuf de Dieu*.

The wren is a bird of solitary and retiring habits, and is very generally diffused throughout the British isles, and, indeed, through Europe, singing its humble song the winter through, in cold and cheerless scenes, amid the icicles on the trees, and even when the flakes of snow come slowly down like plumes, with which to invest the streams and woods and fields.

THE GEYSERS,

OR, BOILING SPRINGS OF ICELAND.



Iceland is an island situated in the Northern Ocean, amid regions of ice and snow; yet it gives abundant evidence of the volcanic fires which are slumbering beneath its surface. Among the remarkable features of this interesting island are its hot springs, which, in some places, throw up a column of water to the height of a hundred feet, accompanied by a tremendous noise. These springs abound in many parts of the coast, as well as in the interior of the island, and in some cases, the waters of the ocean are sensibly heated by their action. The most celebrated of these hot springs are the Geysers, situated in the north of the island, where, within the space of a few acres, more than fifty of them may be seen. Some emit hot water as clear as crystal; others send out hot vapours and troubled waters.

The Great Geyser, which has attracted most attention, rises from a mound of flinty earth, deposited by the water to the height of about thirty feet, and extending about two hundred feet across. On the top of this mound is a basin sixty feet wide, and seven feet deep, in the centre of which is the pipe or opening through which the water rises. The basin and pipe are lined with the same flinty deposit, polished to great smoothness by the constant action of the water; but on the outside of the basin the deposit forms beautiful groups of crystals greatly resembling cauliflowers. Small eruptions of the Geyser take place every two or three hours, but the great eruption occurs only once in about thirty hours. This is preceded by a hollow rumbling sound, and many thundering explosions

which cause the ground to quiver violently. The water at the same time begins to boil more furiously: suddenly a vast body of water rises with a fluctuating motion to the height of eighty or ninety feet, accompanied by a thick pillar of vapour. From the principal column smaller veins jet out to a much greater height, while others stream in arches from the cloud of vapour. Much of the beauty of the column is concealed by the steam, but when this is blown aside by the wind, the water appears shooting upwards in innumerable rays, "spreading out at the top like a lofty pine, and descending in fine rain." The column often descends suddenly, as if its force were exhausted; but it again rises with renewed energy, accompanied by thunders rolling in the earth. The whole eruption continues about ten minutes.

The scene during one of these eruptions is said to be indescribably grand. "The whole surrounding atmosphere is filled with volumes of steam rolling over each other as they ascend, and through which columns of water, shivering into foam, are seen spreading in all directions. Much of the water is lost in vapour; but the greater part falls to the ground in heavy showers of spray. As the jets rise out of the basin, the water reflects the most beautiful colours; sometimes the purest and most brilliant blue; at others, a bright sea-green; but in the further ascent all distinction of colour is lost, and the jets, broken into a thousand parts, appear as white as snow. Some of them are forced upwards perpendicularly; but many are thrown out in beautiful curves. The eruption thus continues, changing its form at every instant, till the force which drives it from beneath is exhausted." The water then subsides through the pipe, and disappears, but immediately rises again, and fills the basin to the height of about four feet; and in this state it remains till the next eruption.

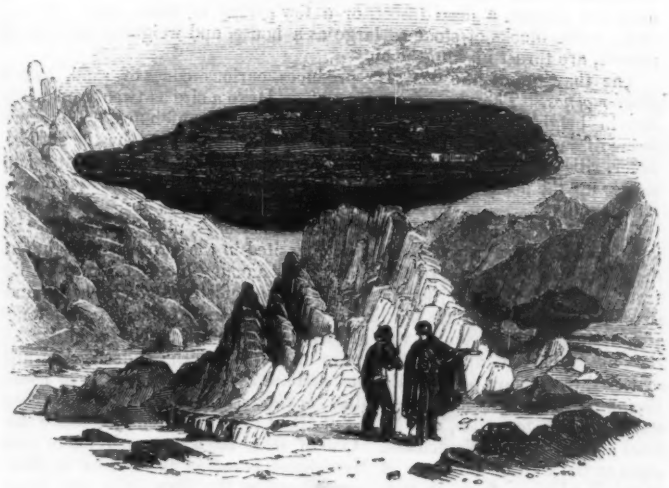
At a short distance from the Great Geyser, is situated the "New Geyser," also called, from its continual noise, the "Roaring Geyser." The natives call it *Strokr*, or the "Churn." This spring rises from a small mound four or five feet high, forming a border at the mouth of the tube which is five feet in diameter, and filled with water to within ten or fourteen feet of the surface. The eruption is thus described:—"A thick cloud of smoke suddenly burst forth, succeeded by a liquid column, which was almost immediately dissipated by the violence of the eruption into fine spray, and rose to an immense height. From time to time, jets shot upwards more than a hundred feet, and some large stones which had been thrown in were cast out with great violence, rising almost out of sight, several of which ascended so perpendicularly as to fall back into the basin, serving for balls to this gigantic jet. The water was soon exhausted, but the clouds of steam continued to escape with a whistling or hissing sound three quarters of an hour, when the eruption ceased, and the fluid remained boiling in the tube as usual."

Some of these natural fountains play for a much longer time than the Great Geyser, and also send their waters to a greater height. The body of water is not so great, but the force of the eruption is quite as remarkable. The flinty matter which these springs deposit, causes the eruptions to vary constantly in force and character, and in time destroys the spring by entirely choking up the tube from which the water rises. Immediately after an eruption, the water in the basin is near the boiling point, and lower down in the tube it is said to be forty degrees hotter than boiling water. These Geysers are supposed to be caused by the collection of heated vapours in large cavities of the earth, which at length acquire sufficient force to

expel the waters subject to their pressure. The word *Geyser* signifies in the Icelandic dialect "*fury*."

Thus amid the wildness and desolation of Icelandic scenery, the simple inhabitants have abundant opportunity of recognising in these magnificent fountains, and in the awful grandeur of volcanoes and volcanic remains, the constant presence and mighty power of their Creator.

GLACIER TABLES.



On the surface of glaciers may frequently be noticed enormous blocks or slabs of stone, perched upon stems of ice like huge mushrooms; sometimes entirely, and at other times partly, supported in the air. They are called *Glacier Tables*. One of them, described by Mr. Forbes, consisted of a flat block of granite measuring twenty-three feet by seventeen feet, and about three and a half feet in thickness. In the month of June 1842, it was easy to step upon this stone from the general surface of the glacier; but as the season advanced it changed its appearance remarkably. The waste of ice at the surface caused the glacier to sink all round the stone, while the ice immediately beneath it was protected from the sun and rain, as by an umbrella. The stone thus appeared to rise above the level of the glacier, supported on an elegant pedestal of beautifully veined ice. "Each time I visited it," says Mr. Forbes, "it was more difficult of ascent; and at last, on the 6th August, the pillar of ice was thirteen feet high, and the broad stone so delicately poised on the summit of it (which measured but a few feet in any direction), that it was almost impossible to guess on what it would ultimately fall, although, by the process of the thaw, its fall in the course of the summer was certain." On a still later day, when Mr. Forbes made a sketch of it, "it was," he says, "probably the most beauti-

ful object of the kind to be seen anywhere in Switzerland. The ice of the pedestal presented the beautiful lamellar structure parallel to the length of the glacier. During my absence in the end of August, it slipped from its support; and in the month of September it was beginning to rise upon a new one, whilst the unmelted base of the first was still very visible upon the glacier."

Glacier tables are formed only of such thick blocks of stone as will prevent the heat of the sun from penetrating through. If the slabs are thin, and of a dark colour, a contrary effect is produced; instead of rising they *sink*. The heat of the sun is absorbed so quickly, that it melts the ice beneath, and the stone soon disappears. A leaf wafted by the wind upon the glacier, a dead insect, or a few grains of black sand, will all sink; while blocks of stone as large as a house, and weighing millions of pounds, are thrust up into the air.

The thawing of the ice also produces curious cones of sand, called *glacier cones*. They have been seen of so large a size as twenty or thirty feet in height, and eighty or a hundred in circumference. They are formed from the sand of the moraines, which, being washed by the surface water, rills into the deep cavities of the glacier, at length accumulates and chokes up the hole, and as the ice subsides, a pyramid or cone of sand is left standing.

The Glacier Tables, as well as the Glacier Cones, move down with the icy stream, and are in process of time deposited in the terminal moraine at the foot of the glacier. In the valley of Chamouny blocks of moraine lie scattered here and there, forming a wilderness of stones of all shapes and sizes, showing how far the ice had in former years extended. And long after quitting the region of the glacier, huge stones, precisely similar to those seen on and about the ice, are to be met with; indeed, they are scattered over many parts of Europe, and are hence called *erratic* or *wandering* blocks: they are also called *boulders*. A great belt of these stones extends for miles, at a height of about eight hundred feet above the level of the lake of Neufchatel. One of these blocks, situated about two miles to the west of the town of Neufchatel, is called the *Pierre à Bot*, or the Toad-stone, from its rude resemblance to the form of a crouching toad. This stone is fifty feet long, twenty wide, and forty high, and contains about forty thousand cubic feet of solid material. It is of granite, similar to that of the Great St. Bernard; from which part of the Alps it is supposed to have come, as there is no similar rock nearer at hand; yet it shows no marks of attrition, all its angles being perfectly sharp. It was suggested many years ago by Professor Playfair, that these erratic blocks were deposited by ancient glaciers, which have since retreated within narrower limits. Speaking of the Toad-stone, he says, "A current of water, however powerful, could never have carried it up an acclivity, but would have deposited it in the first valley it came to, and would, in a much less distance, have rounded its angles, and given to it the shape so characteristic of stones subject to the action of water. A glacier, which fills up valleys in its course, and which conveys rocks on its surface free from attrition, is the only agent we now see capable of transporting them to such a distance, without destroying that sharpness of the angles so distinctive of these masses."

Another proof of the former existence of glaciers is to be found in polished rocks, which are seen many miles away from the site of any existing glacier. It has been already noticed, that the ice, in creeping on,

continually chafes and polishes the rocks over which it moves. The ice is constantly rubbing against its rocky walls or sides, and in time wears down the solid granite, and leaves the most decided proofs of its action.

CORAL-REEFS.

Some parts of the ocean are studded with a peculiar kind of rock, very narrow, but stretched out to a considerable length. It is called a coral-reef, and is produced by innumerable small zoophytes popularly called coral-insects. The coral-insect consists of a little oblong bag of jelly closed at one end, but having the other extremity open, and surrounded by tentacles or feelers, usually six or eight in number, set like the rays of a star. Multitudes of these minute animals unite to form a common stony skeleton called coral, or madrepore, in the minute openings of which they live, protruding their mouths and tentacles when under water, but suddenly drawing them into their holes when danger approaches.

Reefs are of various forms. In some places they occur at a great distance from the land, and run nearly parallel with it: these are called barrier-reefs, and are often of enormous dimensions. Usually a snow-white line of great breakers, with here and there an islet crowned by cocoa-nut trees, separates a broad channel of smooth water from the waves of the open sea. In other places coral-reefs fringe the shore, and are separated from it by a narrow channel of moderate depth; these are called fringing or shore reefs.

But perhaps the most remarkable form of reef is that to which the term Lagoon Island has been applied. In this case the reef approaches the form of a circle; and, surrounding a part of the sea, produces a sheet of smooth water called a lagoon, or lake, within which are usually several smaller islands. From this circumstance the word island, as applied to the whole, has been objected to, and the term "atoll" substituted, which is the name given to these circular groups of coral-islets by the inhabitants of the Indian Ocean.

"Every one," says Mr. Darwin, "must be struck with astonishment when he first beholds one of these vast rings of coral-rock, often many leagues in diameter, here and there surmounted by a low verdant island with dazzling white shores, bathed on the outside by the foaming breakers of the ocean, and on the inside surrounding a calm expanse of water, which, from reflection, is of a bright but pale green colour. The naturalist will feel this astonishment more deeply after having examined the soft and almost gelatinous bodies of these apparently insignificant creatures, and when he knows that the solid reef increases only on the outer edge, which, day and night, is lashed by the breakers of an ocean never at rest."

These animals cannot exist at a greater depth in the sea than about ten fathoms, and as the coral-islands often rise with great steepness from a sea more than three hundred fathoms deep, it would seem that the solid rock has been gradually, and perhaps very slowly, sinking to a lower level, since the time when the little architects commenced their labours. Such being supposed to be the case, the formation of a reef has been thus explained. Let A represent the section of a rocky island; B, B the level of low-water; and D the reef of coral fringing the coast. After the lapse of time, during which it has been sinking, the water-level stands at *b*, *b*; the coral at D has died from the too great depth, but the animals have been working upwards upon the dead matter, so that living coral is still near the surface;

the superior vigour of the species inhabiting the seaward edge, however, has caused that edge to be more elevated than the interior, as at *d*, *d*; so that the appearance is now that of a rocky isle, diminished in extent, surrounded by a reef at some distance, separated by the shallow channel, *e*, *e* (which is exactly the appearance of Tahiti and the larger islands generally). The sinking still goes on, and after a while, the water β, β, is level with the summit of the island, which of course is now an island no longer; the

growth of the coral has kept pace with the depression, and it is still at the surface, as at δ, δ; the more slowly-growing species of the interior are still overflowed, and, as the island is still submerged in the centre, the water, ε, ε, is no longer a ring-shaped channel, but a round lagoon; and thus we have an atoll, as already noticed. The subsequent progress of elevating and clothing the new islet is a rapid one. "As soon as it has reached such a height that it remains almost dry at low-water at the time of ebb, the corals leave off building higher; sea-shells, fragments of coral, sea-hedgehog shells, and their broken-off prickles, are united by the burning sun, through the medium of the cementing calcareous sand, which has arisen from the pulverization of the above-mentioned shells, into one whole or solid stone, which strengthened by the continual throwing up of new materials, gradually increases in thickness, till it at last becomes so high that it is covered only during some seasons of the year by the spring-tides. The heat of the sun so penetrates the mass of stone when it is dry, that it splits in many places, and breaks off in flakes. These flakes, so separated, are raised one upon another by the waves at the time of high-water. The always active surf throws blocks of coral (frequently of a fathom in length, and three or four feet thick), and shells of marine animals, between and upon the foundation stones. After this, the calcareous sand lies undisturbed, and offers to the seeds of trees and plants, cast upon it by the waves, a soil upon which they rapidly grow, to overshadow its dazzling white surface. Entire trunks of trees, which are carried by the rivers from other countries and islands, find here, at length, a resting place after their long wanderings; with these come some smaller animals, such as lizards and insects, as the first inhabitants. Even before the trees form a wood, the real sea-birds nestle there; strayed land-birds take refuge in the bushes; and at a much later period when the work has been long since completed, man also appears, builds his hut on the fruitful soil formed by the corruption of the leaves of the trees, and calls himself lord and proprietor of this new creation."

NO MEANING IN IT.

THE tongue is the best member we have, and yet how few of us use it in reality for the purpose for which it was given—to the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures! "It is set on fire of hell," saith the Apostle, and cuts sharper, we know, than a two-edged sword; but it is not

malice alone that causes it to offend, or to be injurious to others—the simple want of consideration alone, not unfrequently leads us to inflict wounds most painful to bear, and often fatal in their consequences.

Frank Markham was one of those thoughtless young men, who, loving to hear themselves talk, talk often for talking sake. By deed he would have injured no man; he was spoken of as a good-tempered fellow, not overburdened with brains, ready to do an act of kindness to any one, provided the opportunity presented itself, for it must be confessed he never went out of his way to seek it. He had, however, a defect, or, as it might be called, a habit, which rendered him a dangerous acquaintance, and lowered him in the estimation of all who were aware of it. Yielding without reason or reflection to the mere impulse of the moment, he would make remarks upon persons, assert opinions as those of others, or ascribe sentiments and even actions to individuals, for which he had no authority whatever. The habit was so well known, that though occasionally a friend might be startled at first at something related to him, the quarter from whence the information or charge proceeded was no sooner known, than surprise or anxiety ceased. "Frank Markham said so."—It was enough; the smile that followed showed how little either he or his words were regarded: while he himself, when the expressions he had used were repeated to him, almost invariably answered, "What nonsense! I had no meaning for what I said; who's to look at every word he says before he utters it, or can stop to weigh its force? there would be no such thing as conversation in the world. I had no wish to hurt any one, and never have; you know my way; and it is your fault if you make my ant-hills mountains."

It happened one day that Frank was travelling in a railway-carriage with an elderly gentleman, who was a total stranger to him, and another with whom he was partially acquainted as living in the same town with himself. The speed of Frank's tongue fully verified the quaint but correct assertion, that tongues generally, and his in particular, ran the faster for having no weight to carry. He had something to say to each of his fellow-travellers; he knew everybody, everything; knew to whom this estate belonged, to whom that—who inhabited one pretty house, who the other; nor were the proprietors themselves, according to him, strangers to him, or their private affairs a secret to him.

"You seem well acquainted with everyone in this neighbourhood," said the old gentleman at length, for, taciturn himself, he had at first seemed annoyed at Frank's loquacity. "From your general knowledge of these parts, and all connected with them, I suppose you are an inhabitant of D—y."

"I am," returned he; our family has lived there for generations (he forgot that his father and mother were natives of Macclesfield); from the most ragged-headed boy in Layton Lane to our respected member, Mr. —, I know men, women, and children."

"Of course then you know the family of the Montagues," said the stranger.

"To be sure I do, as well as possible," returned Frank. "Mr. Montague died suddenly of apoplexy, I was told;" then looking mysteriously, he added, "sudden deaths are always suspicious. There was a good deal said about it at the end, but with what foundation is another matter."

The stranger looked very grave, and for a short time was silent; then turning abruptly to Frank he said,

"Are you acquainted with Lawrence Montague?"

"Acquainted with him!" repeated he, "Lawrence and I have always been on the most intimate terms. I question whether I know myself better than I know him."

"What sort of a young man is he?" asked the other.

Frank laughed.

"I see you don't know him," replied he, "then I'll tell you. He's a rollicking, harum-scarum fellow as you please, when he likes."

"I thought he was a remarkable steady young man," said the stranger quickly, fixing his eyes almost sternly on Frank.

"And so he is in a general way," replied Frank; "but, as I told you before, he can be—"

"What?" demanded the other.

"As wild as the best of us," returned he, laughing; "up to anything and everything."

"You greatly surprise me," said the stranger, and his look, to Frank's delight, showed that he really was so. "And his mother—does she sanction such conduct?"

"I should not think that she troubles herself much about it," replied he. "She is wonderfully particular in some things, and as to her opinions on certain points, it is perfectly marvellous how prejudiced she is;—but she can be like other people after all. I have heard a good many people say they should not be surprised at her marrying again, and that at no very distant period."

"Marry again!" repeated the other, "you must be mistaken, sir."

"Oh no, I am not," said Frank; it's no make-up of my own I assure you. I have heard it a dozen times. I'll tell you the name of the gentleman—if I—"

At that moment, however, the guard's voice proclaimed the station at which they had arrived. Frank and his townsman left the carriage, with an intent to take a cross train which was expected shortly. By way of passing away the time, they walked up and down the platform.

"I wonder who that old fellow is!" said Frank.

"Who? the person standing there?" returned the other, whose name was Osborne, pointing to a gentleman standing at a short distance from them.

"No, no," replied Frank; "the old fellow that was in the carriage with us: that man's face is summer and sunshine to look upon, the other's pretty much as sour as the north side of a crab-tree."

"I know nothing of him," returned he; "but I must own to you I am sorry that you said what you did about young Montague and his mother. You must excuse me, but I think you went a great deal further than you had any authority to go."

"Why, what did I say?" asked Frank.

"You said that Montague was a 'rollicking fellow,' replied he; "now let me ask what idea you intended to convey by that word?"

"What idea?" repeated he. "Pshaw! it's one matter to make use of a word, and another exactly to define it; there are few of us who would cut a good figure if we were to be brought to book in this manner. Rollicking, full of fun, mischievous, and all that; not vicious, though. To tell the truth, I saw the word for the first time in a tale I was reading the other day, and I was so pleased with it, that it popped into my head as a good opportunity to make use of it."

"A bad opportunity, I think," said Osborne, shaking his head. "At

least, unless I am greatly mistaken, the expression was ill applied in this case. I have always looked upon Lawrence Montague as a very steady young man; and as to his mother, she is a most exemplary woman. I have not heard a word about her marrying again."

"Nonsense," cried Frank: "if the old fellow knows them, which I don't care whether he does or not, he will know that I had no meaning in what I said, and if he does not know them, what does it signify if I had said fifty times as much as I have? If you are to be bound to say just so much of a person, and no more, for fear you should say something more than is exactly correct, who is to live in society? I could not."

"The more the pity," replied Mr. Osborne; "in this boasted age of general information and knowledge, one might think that conversation could be carried on without making our acquaintance the subject of it, or of using mere embellishments to our remarks, by the way of rendering them the more agreeable."

Frank did not feel quite so easy as he desired to appear, and he was glad to get rid of the discourse.

"Ay, well," said he, "it's done now, and there's an end of it. The old fellow has forgotten it all by this time, I dare say; so, know them or not, no harm's done."

But Frank was mistaken, harm was done; the stranger was an uncle of Mrs. Montague. Displeased at her marriage with her late husband, merely because he wished to have seen her united to a wealthy person of his own choosing, he had abstained from all intercourse with her for many years. By the death of Mr. Montague, she had been left in very indifferent circumstances, and anxiety for her son had led her, after many struggles, to make application to her uncle for assistance; he was rich and unmarried, and her son's education was not complete. She wrote with all the eloquence of maternal feeling, and, judging by the tears her letter had cost her to indite, she thought it could scarcely fail to touch the heart of its reader. Nor was she mistaken; her powerful and pathetic pleading shook the resolution of Mr. Shenley, and he yet wavered between a determination to maintain his obduracy and an inclination to become reconciled to his niece.

It was in this frame of mind that he encountered Frank Markham. The information he received from him, given, as it appeared to him, by one who could neither be mistaken in what he advanced, nor could have any motive to mislead another, at once provoked and decided him. Immediately on his return home, he wrote to Mrs. Montague, refusing her request, and couching his denial in severe terms. This was a heavy blow, and rendered the more so from the hope she had indulged of success. What was to be done? alas! there was no alternative; she was obliged to accept the friendly offer made her by an acquaintance of her husband, to send out her son as a clerk in a merchant's office in Jamaica. Had Mr. Shenley relented, and afforded her the aid for which she sued, Lawrence would have been able to keep his last term at Cambridge, and the long-cherished desire of his heart, to take holy orders, would have been gratified. As it was, his prospects were blighted for ever. Mother and son parted, and parted too, to meet no more. Cholera was raging in the island when Lawrence landed, and he fell almost immediately a victim to the dreadful malady.

"What a savage that uncle of Mrs. Montague's was to refuse the assistance she asked of him, rolling in riches as he is, and neither chick nor child to claim a farthing from him!" cried Frank Markham to Mr. Osborne, who was speaking of the circumstance, which had soon got wind, and was

much commented upon. "Poor Lawrence's death may fairly be laid at his door. I wonder what excuse he could make for such barbarous conduct."

"It is said," replied the other, "that the old gentleman gave as his reason, when the subject was afterwards named to him, that he had been credibly informed the young man was not one who deserved to be encouraged. I was told that he even declared he was on his road to ——, for the express purpose of seeing Mrs. Montague, and ascertaining what could really be done for Lawrence, when, hearing this disparaging character of him, he altered his intention, returned home, and wrote a denial as unkind as it was peremptory."

"What a shame!" cried Frank; "a double shame; a shame to him for being so ready to believe anything against the poor fellow; and a shame to the person who said it; he deserves, let him be who he will,——"

"Stop!" exclaimed Mr. Osborne, "do you remember travelling with an elderly gentleman some little time ago, when we were going to ——? that gentleman was no other than Mr. Shenley; I have since seen him, and recognised him as our companion. If you have forgotten what then occurred, I have not. I told you, if you recollect, how sorry I was that you had spoken of Mrs. Montague and Lawrence as you had done, and I much regret that I suffered your words to pass unnoticed."

Frank coloured deeply.

"Impossible!" cried he, "any one might have seen that I had no meaning in what I said."

His heart throbbed, however, as he spoke, and he felt, as his countenance betrayed, much grieved and annoyed.

"You must excuse me," said the other, "when presuming on the privilege of an elder, I tell you, that you and every one, *ought* to have a meaning in what you say. No word, particularly when we speak of others, is unimportant; and to give a false impression of another's character, because we are careless of the terms we use in speaking of him, is a fault of no trifling description. The wise man employs his words as the experienced and skilful soldier employs his weapons,—for defence or lawful attack; the simple one plays with his words, as a child with a firebrand, causing the ruin of others, whilst simply diverting himself. Take this advice for the future: feel the value of your expressions before you utter them, and always be careful not only to convey a meaning to them, but such a meaning as will do justice to others, as well as credit to yourself."

THE CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER.

"A BLACK cloud makes the traveller mend his pace, and mind his home, whereas a fair day and a pleasant way wastes his time, and stealeth away his affections, in the prospect of the country. However others may think of it, yet I take it as a mercy that now and then some clouds do interpose my sun, and many times some troubles do eclipse my comforts. For I perceive if I should find too much friendship in my inn in my pilgrimage, I should soon forget my father's house and my pilgrimage."—LUCAS.

He that rises first to prayer, has a more early title to a blessing; but he that changes night into day, labour into idleness, watchfulness to sleep, changes his hopes of blessing into a dream.